

Autumn Internationals: All Blacks Add Josh Lord for Autumn Tests

Lock Josh Lord has been called up as a standby for injured forward Tupou Vaa'i when the All Blacks declared their squad for the Autumn Internationals tour of the United States and Europe on Monday. Vaa'i, who requires knee surgery, and prop Lomax, who has a fractured thumb and was replaced by the uncapped Mafileo, were New Zealand's notable injury setbacks after the Rugby Championship drive.

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As expected, fly-half Beauden Barrett, winger Caleb Clarke, and prop Ethan de Groot were all included in the 36-man line-up despite missing New Zealand's previous fixture against Australia in Perth due to injury. Lord was favored ahead of Sam Darry and rookie lock Naitoa as a standby for Vaa'i, whose physicality and flexibility have made him one of the most effective All Blacks forwards this season.

New Zealand will face Ireland in Chicago on November 2, followed by tests on the subsequent weekends against Scotland in Edinburgh, England, at Twickenham, and Wales in Cardiff. There is a rich history that has led to this moment for our group, so we will be honoring and drawing motivation from the feats that have come before us, All Blacks coach Scott Robertson said.

The rematch against Ireland at Soldier Field will be a major event, and then meeting some of the northern hemisphere's strongest teams at their home grounds is a great test for us. We are eagerly looking forward to this very special tour.

Meanwhile, George Ford has been a mainstay in the England setup for more than a decade, and he is liking the chance to compete alongside such a talented group.

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Ford Reflects on England Squad Depth Ahead of Autumn Internationals 2025

Speaking about the squad, Ford said: I believe the squad is immensely gifted; the standard within it is on par with any England squad I've been part of in the past eleven or twelve years. As a player, when you're in a group like that and you go into camp, you're training daily and challenging every day with these remarkable teammates, and that's genuinely how you improve and progress.



The England fly-half department has seldom been this competitive, Ford added. Probably not in the period I've been involved with England. There was obviously me, Owen, and then a few others who were rotating in and out of the setup at that time. It's where you aspire to be in terms of squad depth, the race that's going to be generated in training, and the different things each of us contributes.

Fin, Marcus, and Owen have all been outstanding in that regard. Although the competition is intense, Ford is keen to emphasize that the team's success, not individual selection, is what matters most. There's a lot spoken about battling for

positions, and you need that competitive edge, but the most crucial thing is England winning, especially with the Autumn Internationals 2025 fast approaching.

It is not about who gets picked or who doesn't in the match day 23; it's whether England triumphs at the weekend, particularly with the Autumn Internationals on the horizon. Whatever your responsibility is within that, you've got to perform your duty as well as you can to ensure England secures more victories than not.

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England Vs New Zealand: Ford Focused on Team Success Ahead of Autumn Internationals

We will always push ourselves and present our best when playing games. But if that isn't the case, then the priority remains England winning, so do your job even if you're not directly involved. Ford also reflected on the unmatched emotion of winning with England. When you're part of a victorious England side at Twickenham, or during World Cups, there's no greater feeling, he said.

Despite speculation around who will claim the starting number 10 shirt, Ford remained composed about his own prospects. I never assume I'm No.1. Selection is very subjective; that's why Steve is the head coach, because he chooses the team he believes will succeed on the weekend. For me, that's a bit beyond my control right now, because my focus is performing as well as I can for Sale.



England coach Steve Borthwick is likely thrilled with the strength in the fly-half position. Having four world-class options gives him tactical flexibility while also driving race in drill, something Ford believes really aids the team overall. With England vs New Zealand on the horizon during the future Autumn Internationals, that depth and flexibility could prove crucial in shaping England's attacking plan.

I'd imagine Steve's quite pleased to have four choices like that, but the key thing for us is to compete hard while ensuring the primary goal remains to help the team win on the weekend, mainly with the Autumn Internationals upcoming. Maintaining that focus and intensity will be vital as England prepares for the high-stakes contests the Autumn Internationals are set to bring.

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